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GEORGE TICKNOR.

MEMOIR
OF
GEORGE TICKNOR,
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HISTORIAN OF SPANISH LITERATURE.

BY CHARLES HENRY HART, LL.B.,
Author of "Memoir of William Hickling Prescott," and Historiographer of "The Numismatic and
Antiquarian Society of Philadelphia," etc. etc.

Read before the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Philadelphia, May 4, 1871.

PHILADELPHIA:
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1871.

MEMOIR OF GEORGE TICKNOR.

THIS evening I will ask your attention while I portray briefly some of the incidents which went to make up the life, character, and work of our late fellow member, the accomplished historian of Spanish literature, and biographer of his life-long friend, the historian of Spain, Mexico, and Peru.

It is a rare instance in the literature of one country, to have three of its brightest ornaments devote their energies and talents to the delineation and elucidation of the history of another and far distant country,—far distant, not only in its geographical position, but equally so in its manners, its customs, its people, and its language; and with such success that their works are the leading authorities upon the subjects of which they treat. Such, however, has been the case with Spain, and our Irving, our Prescott, and our Ticknor; while two other of our authors, Motley and Kirk, have handled with like success, topics connected with and arising out of, the history of that country. It is to Mr. Ticknor, the last of the trio, that we have especial reference at this time.

GEORGE TICKNOR was born in Boston, Massachusetts, August 1st, 1791. He was descended in the sixth generation from Sergeant William Ticknor, of Kent, England, who emigrated to this country and settled in Scituate, Massachusetts, where he was married on the 29th of October, 1656, by Major Humphrey Atherton, to Hannah, daughter of John Stockbridge, one of the early settlers of that town. This William Ticknor, was sergeant of

General Cudworth's guard or "particular company," in King Philip's war, 1676, and it is to this event that we must ascribe the sobriquet by which he was ever after known. His wife, Hannah, died in 1665, and the next year he married Deborah, daughter of Thomas Hyland, and she deceased in 1693, leaving her husband surviving. The date of his death is uncertain. He had two children by his first wife, the elder of whom, John, died the same year as his mother, and the younger, William, baptized in 1664, married Lydia, daughter of Deacon Joseph Tilden, November 2d, 1696, and removed to Lebanon, in the colony of Connecticut, some time in the year 1710. Before their leaving Scituate, they had four children, two sons and two daughters; the second, named John, born in 1699, was married at Lebanon, in 1724, to Mary Bailey. This John died in 1751, having had nine children, most of whom survived their father. His fifth child, Elisha, born in 1736, was married, first, in 1755, to Ruth Knowles, of Truro, Massachusetts, and second in 1772, the year following his first wife's death, to Deborah Davis of Lebanon. He died in 1822, having had by his two wives, fifteen children. His eldest child was born March 25th, 1757, and was the father of the subject of this memoir. He was named Elisha, from his father, and was graduated by Dartmouth College in 1783, and from the year of his graduation until 1786, was one of the "Scholæ Moorensis Præceptores," as the college triennial has it. This Moor's school, which took its name from a munificent farmer in Mansfield, Connecticut, who donated a house and two acres of land for the purpose, was instituted by the venerable Wheelock for the education of Indian youth, but the plan proving unsuccessful, finally became connected with Dartmouth College, as a preparatory academy, and Elisha Ticknor severed his connection with it to take charge of a school at Pittsfield, Massachusetts, which he kept for a twelvemonth, and then removed to Boston, where he became Principal of the Free Franklin School. This position he continued to hold until 1794, when he was forced to resign by his

rapidly failing health. He then engaged in the business of a grocer, and the change from his former sedentary occupation to a life of activity entirely restored him.

He continued in commercial pursuits until 1812, when he retired upon a competency, and died at Hanover, New Hampshire, June 26th, 1821. He was one of the founders of the primary schools of Boston, and of the first savings bank, in New England. By his contemporaries he was familiarly termed "Master Ticknor," and a romantic story used to be told by one of them of his engagement to the daughter of a French nobleman, one of his pupils, which was adroitly broken off by her father, and he subsequently married Mrs. Elizabeth [Billings] Curtis, widow of Dr. Benjamin Curtis, of Boston. He is described as having been of light complexion, with regular features, and his address that of a "courteous gentleman of the old school." The sole issue of this marriage was one son, George, whose career I shall proceed now to sketch. He evinced early in life a love for learning and for books, and at the hands of his estimable father received his rudimentary education, and acquired a knowledge of the modern languages of Europe. Preparatory to his entering Dartmouth College, at the tender age of eleven, he passed a summer near Hanover, New Hampshire, and here it was, in the month of May, 1802, that he first saw Daniel Webster, who had come from his school in Fryeburg, to visit his brother Ezekiel, then a student in college. Although at this time their acquaintance could have been only such as might arise between an intelligent boy and a young man ardent in the pursuit of "teaching young ideas how to shoot," still it was the beginning of what afterwards became a close intimacy for life.

Mr. Ticknor graduated in the class of (1807), and had for his classmates, among others, Professor Josiah Parsons Cooke, Honorable Timothy Farrar, and General Sylvanus Thayer, all of whom survive him, in the "seer and yellow leaf" of life. But not content with the regular college course which he had com-

pleted with high honor, he resorted to the school of the late Rev. John Sylvester John Gardiner, then Rector of Trinity Church, Boston, and himself a pupil of the renowned and celebrated Dr. Samuel Parr, who was reputed the most learned and elegant classical scholar of his time in England, for instruction in the classics not elsewhere to be had at that day, and pursued under him an extensive course of study in the Greek and Latin authors. It was at this school that Ticknor formed that acquaintance which soon ripened into a life-long friendship with the future historian of Spain, Mexico, and Peru, "then a bright boy a little more than twelve years old." How seldom it is, that we find, as in his case with Webster and Prescott, that the earliest friendships are the most lasting.

In latter years Mr. Ticknor often referred with great satisfaction to the excellent groundwork in good scholarship, which was laid for him at that time and which he attributed mainly to the valuable oral instruction he received from Dr. Gardiner, whom he regarded as a very accomplished belles-lettres scholar. It is rather curious to notice the transmission of good scholarship through three generations, by direct instruction, as in the case of Dr. Parr, Dr. Gardiner, and Mr. Ticknor. In this connection it may be of interest to note that Mr. Ticknor afterwards met Dr. Parr, at Hatton, and the doctor expressed to him his great respect and regard for his former pupil. During the time of his connection with Dr. Gardiner's classes, Mr. Ticknor was a member of the Anthology Club, formed in Boston, in 1804, for the purpose of publishing a periodical called "The Monthly Anthology and Boston Review," which extended to some ten volumes, and died in the sixth year of its existence, from the ashes of which the now famous Boston Athenæum arose. To this periodical he made his first contributions to that literature which he was destined later so nobly to adorn. After devoting some three years to his classical studies, he gave as many more to the law, under the direction of the Hon. William Sullivan, and was admitted to the

bar in 1813, but he never practised, his connection with the legal profession being merely nominal.

In the winter of 1814-15, Mr. Ticknor, having made up his mind to pass some time at the University of Gottingen, was endeavoring, chiefly among the Germans in the interior of Pennsylvania, to obtain information concerning the modes of teaching in Germany, about which there was, as he himself says, "an absolute ignorance in New England." Continuing his journey further south, he visited Monticello, carrying with him flattering letters of introduction from ex-President Adams and others. "He remained there some days, attracting an unusual share of the attention and regard of Mr. Jefferson and his family by his uncommonly ripe learning. Until he became satisfied that it would be better to draw the body of the professors of the university from abroad, Jefferson had been anxious that Ticknor should fill one of the chairs." ("Randall's Life of Jefferson.") Returning from the shrine of true Democracy in America, Mr. Ticknor passed some time in Washington, staying at Crawford's Hotel, Georgetown, then the headquarters of the Federal members of Congress, with the idea no doubt of familiarizing himself with the two great antagonistic political parties, then struggling for the reins of power in this country.

In April, 1815, accompanied by his friend Edward Everett, who had recently been appointed Professor of the Greek Language and Literature in Harvard College, with the understanding that he should spend some time in Europe before engaging in the arduous duties of the post, Mr. Ticknor embarked for Gottingen, with the purpose of devoting himself, at that great seat of learning, almost exclusively to philological studies. "We passed," he tells us in his tribute to his companion Everett, before the Massachusetts Historical Society, "a few weeks in London, during the exciting period of Bonaparte's last campaign, and just at the time of the battle of Waterloo. But we were in a hurry to be at work. We hastened, therefore, through Holland,

stopping chiefly to buy books, and early in August were already in the chosen place of our destination. It was our purpose to remain there a year; but the facilities for study were such as we had never heard or dreamt of. My own residence was in consequence protracted to a year and nine months, and Mr. Everett's was protracted yet six months longer—both of us leaving the tempting school at last sorry and unsatisfied." During the period of his residence in Gottingen, Mr. Ticknor lived in the house of Bouterwek, the distinguished author of the history of modern literature in Europe, and a favorite teacher in the University, and might it not have been from him that he first drew the inspiration for his future labors?

From Germany, Mr. Ticknor went to France, arriving in Paris but a few days after the arrival of his former school-companion Prescott, who was seeking in the great cities of the continent some relief from his fast darkening blindness, which relief, however, was denied him, and he returned home in the summer of 1817, with his sight little improved. It was during Mr. Ticknor's sojourn in Paris that he received from Harvard University the appointment of Professor of the French and Spanish Languages and Literature, and of Belles-lettres. He had, while yet at Gottingen, been proffered by the corporation of the college, the chair of Modern Literature on the foundation of the late Abiel Smith, Esq., an eminent merchant of Boston; but Mr. Ticknor would accept it only on condition that his salary should commence at the time when the offer was made, and that he should apply the first year's salary to the purchase of works suitable to his department, for the college library. It was the notification of the acceptance by the college government of his conditions which consummated the appointment, that he received at this time. He at once set about preparing himself for his new post. In Paris he explored, under able teachers, the difficult Romance dialect, the medium of the beautiful Provençal, and then in Spain, sought to perfect himself in the true Castilian.

In Rome he studied Italian, and in London and Edinburgh the purest models in our own language and literature.

It will be remembered that prior to Mr. Ticknor's visit to Europe, he had been spending some time with Jefferson at Monticello, and from the author of the Declaration of Independence he took warm letters of introduction to Lafayette, Dupont De Nemours, Say, and others, which, together with his own polished and agreeable manners, gained for him such an entrance into Parisian and European society as few of his age and country could gain. It is, however, with his visit to England and Scotland that we will find most delight, not so much for the places he visited as for the people he saw and the friendships he secured. We have a partiality for these men and women, for their rivers and their towns. Their glory is our glory, and their honor our honor. We speak the same language, in our veins courses the same blood. In their towns our forefathers first breathed life, and from their rivers first drank drink. It is this that makes us so nearly one, and causes us to be pained when we hear or see anything that tends to lessen our love and reverence for our once mother country.

In the fall of 1818, Mr. Ticknor came from a residence of some months in Spain, to London, where he formed the acquaintance of "the three children," Irving, Leslie, and Newton, all of whom made the excursion together from London to Windsor, which resulted in the beautiful paper in the "Sketch Book." But they were his own countrymen; of those to the manor born whom he met, the most distinguished were Lord Byron and Sir Walter Scott, and we must all remember his charming sketches of these two sons of genius, contributed to our own Allibone's wondrous "Dictionary." He knew also, among others, Rogers, Wordsworth, Southey, William Roscoe, Sir James Mackintosh, Lord Holland, and Professor Monk, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester and the biographer of Bentley. With most of these he continued to correspond after his return home, and, with many of them renewed

his acquaintance in after years. Maria Edgeworth and Miss Mitford seem to have been drawn strongly toward him, while with Humboldt, Goethe, Schlegel, and Madame de Staël, he was on terms of familiar intercourse.

During the winter and spring of 1819, he passed some weeks at Edinburgh, and then and there saw Scott frequently, and dined with him several times at "Poor No. 39," as Scott used to call his house in Castle Street after he left it. As the spring came on there was a vacation in the court of which Sir Walter was clerk, and he left town for Abbotsford, having first invited Mr. Ticknor to visit him there. This invitation was accepted, and Mr. Ticknor, accompanied by Mr. Cogswell, the late well-known superintendent of the Astor Library, New York, spent three days at Abbotsford, about the middle of March. After his departure Scott wrote to Southey, under date of April 4th: "I shall like our American acquaintance the better that he has sharpened your remembrance of me; but he is also a wonderful fellow for romantic lore and antiquarian research, considering his country. I have now seen four or five well-lettered Americans, ardent in pursuit of knowledge and free from the ignorance and forward presumption which distinguish many of their countrymen. I hope they will inoculate their country with a love of letters so nearly allied to a desire of peace and a sense of public justice—virtues to which the great trans-Atlantic community is more strange than could be wished." In this connection it may not be out of place to state what is not generally known, and certainly is of much interest, that Scott at one time contemplated writing a weird story or novel based on the strange witchcraft delusions of our country in the days of its early settlement, and for the purpose had collected several works bearing upon the subject. Why he abandoned the intention I do not know, but the works which he had secured for the sources of his information, he afterwards presented to Henry Brevoort, of New York, the chosen friend of Washington Irving, and the accomplished father

W. M. L.

of our Honorary Vice-President J. Carson Brevoort, of Brooklyn, in whose possession these literary treasures, each enriched with Scott's autograph, now are, and where I have had the privilege and pleasure of handling and examining them.

Early in the summer of 1819 Ticknor returned from Europe, bringing with him the first numbers of the Sketch-book from Irving, and a valuable collection of books, forming the nucleus around which at the time of his death the finest private library of Spanish literature in the world had grown. He tells us, in the preface to the first edition of his History, how these precious tomes were secured, and pays a pleasurable tribute to his Spanish preceptor, Don José Antonio Conde, of Madrid, who assisted him in collecting the works he needed; "—never an easy task where bookselling in the sense elsewhere given to the word was unknown, and where the inquisition and the confessional had often made what was most desirable, most rare. But Don José knew the lurking places where such books and their owners were to be sought; and to him I am indebted for the foundation of a collection in Spanish literature which without help like his I should have failed to make." In the month of August following his return, he was formally inaugurated into the Professorship on the Smith Foundation in Harvard University, which position he continued to hold until May 1835, when he resigned and was succeeded by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who in turn was followed twenty years later by James Russell Lowell, the present incumbent of the chair. He entered at once on his academic labors and delivered a series of lectures on the subjects which he was chosen to illustrate. These lectures, delivered in an impressive manner, and with their luminous and often eloquent diction, gave a new impulse to letters. "We well remember," writes Prescott, in the *North American Review* for January, 1850, "the sensation produced on the first delivery of these lectures, which seemed to break down the barrier which had so long confined the student to a converse with antiquity; they opened to him a free range

among those great masters of modern literature who had hitherto been veiled in the obscurity of a foreign idiom. The influence of this instruction was soon visible in the higher education, as well as the literary ardor shown by the graduates. So decided was the impulse thus given to the popular sentiment, that considerable apprehension was felt lest modern literature was to receive a disproportionate share of attention in the scheme of collegiate education."

During his connection with the University he suggested several valuable improvements in the system of discipline, for which he had derived the hints from the German institutions of learning he had visited; and in 1825, published, in a pamphlet of some fifty pages, "Remarks on Changes lately proposed or adopted in Harvard University." His views on these subjects were greatly admired by his early friend Mr. Jefferson, who wrote to him a letter, defending the system of allowing students in colleges the uncontrolled choice of their studies, after reaching a certain age and grade of elementary qualification. This is the plan with some changes lately introduced into most of our American colleges, and familiarly termed "the elective system;" a system which in our mind has more evils than virtues, its benefits tending much toward the prosperity of the institution, but little for a high state of cultivation in the graduates. In the letter just referred to, Mr. Jefferson informed Mr. Ticknor that the last of the buildings for the University of Virginia would be nearly finished by the autumn of 1824, and he wanted him then to make a visit to Monticello, and contribute his knowledge of the regulations and discipline of the European schools, to aid in shaping those of the United States. He declared that the rock he most dreaded was the discipline of the institution, because "the insubordination of our youth was now the greatest obstacle to their education." This invitation was accepted in December of that year, and Mr. Ticknor—who had been married, September 18, 1821, to Anna, youngest daughter of the late Samuel Eliot, of Boston—was

accompanied by his wife, as also by Daniel Webster; and they spent four or five days with Jefferson, then over eighty years of age. The pleasure of the visit was very much marred to the visitors by the news received by Mr. Webster, after leaving Washington, that his youngest child, a boy of a couple of years, was dangerously ill; but the intercourse between the two leading statesmen of this country—one in the setting and the other in the rising sun of his power—was marked by much attention and deference to the views and opinions of the other.

While Mr. Ticknor was engaged in the duties of his Professorship he found time to make some few contributions to general literature. In 1823, he published a "Syllabus of a Course of Lectures on the History and Criticism of Spanish Literature," and two years later contributed to the *North American Review*, "Outlines of the Principal Events in the Life of Lafayette," which subsequently went through several editions in pamphlet form, and was translated and printed both in France and Germany. In 1826, having been appointed a member of the Board of Visitors to the Military Academy at West Point, he prepared the report required of that body, and the next year he collected the fugitive pieces of his friend, the late Nathan Appleton Haven, and published them with a memoir from his own pen. With Robert Walsh, Mr. Ticknor was quite intimate, and for his *Review*, the *American Quarterly*, issued at Philadelphia by Carey & Lea, he wrote two articles—one an elaborate paper on the "Early Spanish Drama" (1828), and the other, "Remarks on the Life and Writings of Daniel Webster" (1831), afterwards reprinted separately with additions. Before the American Institute of Education, in August, 1832, he delivered a lecture on the "Best Methods of Teaching the Living Languages," a subject about which no one was better informed.

In May, 1835, Mr. Ticknor was forced to resign his chair in the University, owing to a great domestic affliction, the loss of his only son at the early age of seven years, which shock for a

time threatened to affect seriously the health of Mrs. Ticknor. For her restoration, he determined to try, with his family, the efficacy of a European tour, and thus, a second time, he sought the other side of the broad Atlantic. Here he met again many of the friends of his former visit, but alas, many of them had gone "to that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns." In Spain, he made the acquaintance of Don Pascual de Gayangos, Professor of Arabic in the University of Madrid, and destined to become one of the translators of his future History, of whom, in the preface to that work, he says: "Certainly in his peculiar departments among the most eminent scholars now living, and one to whose familiarity with whatever regards the literature of his own country, the frequent references in my notes bear a testimony not to be mistaken." Humboldt, writing to Bunsen, about this same period, says: "You no doubt well remember the time before the flood, when two highly gifted, classically educated Americans, Ticknor and Everett, travelled all over Europe. Ticknor again appears upon the horizon. Receive him with the kindness which you so well know how to exercise. For that you shall have my thanks. Ticknor is the friend of our house." And in Crabbe Robinson's entertaining "Diary and Reminiscences," lately published, there is an allusion to the great pleasure he and Wordsworth, with whom he was travelling, experienced at meeting Mr. Ticknor in Rome, in the spring of 1837. In the same Diary, one month later, June 12th, is the following entry: "Just before we reached Como, the scenery became very grand. On our arrival I had just time to run to the cathedral, but all other feelings were for the time overpowered by the pleasure of meeting the Ticknors, a very fortunate occurrence, quite unexpected. They, too, were going up the lake by the steamboat, and thus we united the pleasure of the scenery with the gratification of a chat with a very clever family. Perhaps on this account I saw too little of the lake. Its beauties were not unknown to me. At all events the day was a most

agreeable one." There are several references to meeting the Ticknors at other places during this "Italian tour," the last at Venice on the twenty-third of June, in these words: "We called upon the Ticknors, and Wordsworth accompanied them to hear Tasso chanted by gondoliers."

The chief object for which this foreign travel was undertaken, having been accomplished by the complete restoration of Mrs. Ticknor's health, they returned home early in the year 1839, and Mr. Ticknor devoted the ten succeeding years of his life, amid the rich resources of his unexampled collections, and with his mind trained and perfected by his previous studies, to his great work, the "History of Spanish Literature." It was published simultaneously in New York by the Harpers, and in London by Murray, and at once attained the rank of a classic in the language. It was translated into Spanish by Gayangos and Vedia, into German by Julius, and into French by Magnabal. A second edition was called for in 1854, and a third appeared, almost entirely rewritten, with additions and alterations, in 1866. From the preface to the last edition, dated "Park Street, February, 1863," I must transcribe the closing words: "Its preparation has been a pleasant task, scattered lightly over the years that have elapsed since the first edition of this work was published, and that have been passed, like the rest of my life, almost entirely among my own books. That I shall ever recur to this task again, for the purpose of further changes or additions, is not at all probable. My accumulated years forbid any such anticipation; and therefore, with whatever of regret I may part from what has entered into the happiness of so considerable a portion of my life, I feel that I now part from it for the last time. *Extremum hoc munus habeto.*"

The history of Spanish Literature is divided by its author into three periods; the first treats of "the literature that existed in Spain between the first appearance of the present written language and the early part of the reign of the Emperor Charles

the Fifth, or from the end of the twelfth century to the beginning of the sixteenth." The second, "the literature that existed in Spain from the accession of the Austrian Family to its extinction; or from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth"—and the third, "the literature that existed in Spain between the accession of the Bourbon Family and the invasion of Bonaparte; or from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the early part of the nineteenth." To the first belong a valuable essay on the formation of the Spanish language out of the Latin, the Gothic, and the Arabic tongues, which successive invasions of the Peninsula had mixed with the speech of the still older races; the early literature of the ballad, including the national "Poem of the Cid;" the chronicles, the romance, and the drama, topics all of curious historical as well as literary interest, opening many points of learned and philosophical investigation. The second period introduces us to the glories of the Castilian, the theatre of Lope de Vega and Calderon, and the novels of Cervantes, the historical and lyric schools—with the varied development of a rich, fertile, original literature. The third is the broken age of decline under historic influences, which are skilfully treated. Irving, in thanking the author for a presentation copy of his work, characteristically says: "I am glad you have brought it out during my lifetime, for it will be a *vade mecum* for the rest of my days. When I have once read it through, I shall keep it by me like a Stilton cheese, to give a dig into whenever I want a relishing morsel. I began to fear it would never see the light in my day, or that it might fare with you as with that good lady, who went thirteen years with child and then brought forth a little old man, who died in the course of a month of extreme old age. But you have produced three strapping volumes, full of life, and freshness, and vigor, and that will live forever. You have laid the foundations of your work so deep, that nothing can shake it; you have built it up with a care that renders it reliable in all its parts; and you have finished

it off with a grace and beauty that leave nothing to be desired. It is well worth a lifetime to achieve such a work."

On its appearance it was elaborately reviewed both in this country and abroad. From that by Mr. Prescott, from which I have already quoted, in the "North American," for January, 1850, I must cite again. He says: "Mr. Ticknor's History is conducted in a truly philosophical spirit. Instead of presenting a barren record of books—which, like the catalogue of a gallery of paintings, is of comparatively little use to those who have not previously studied them—he illustrates the works by the personal history of their authors, and this again by the history of the times in which he lived; affording by the reciprocal action of the one on the other a complete record of Spanish civilization, both social and intellectual." In regard to Mr. Ticknor's style, he says: "we cannot conclude without some notice of the style, so essential an element in a work of elegant literature. It is clear, classical, and correct, with a sustained moral dignity that not unfrequently rises to eloquence. But it is usually distinguished by a calm philosophical tenor, that is well suited to the character of the subject." Page upon page of equally high commendation of this important work, could with ease be reproduced, but I shall content myself with only one other, that showing the appreciation with which it is held in the country about whose literature it treats. In "Spain, her institutions, politics, and people," published in 1853, from the facile pen of S. Teackle Wallis, Esq., of Baltimore—the author says: "Mr. Ticknor's history is everything that could be desired to supply what is thus felt in Spain to be a pressing literary want. It is a history of books as well as of literature. The variety, completeness, and accuracy of its details were—as I had occasion to know—a source of grateful surprise to the most learned of the Spanish literary archæologists. The acuteness and profundity of its criticism and its perfect comprehension and appreciation of the Spanish mind, and taste, and spirit, were regarded by the most eminent

of the native writers and thinkers as all that a Spaniard could have been able to attain and next to miraculous in a foreigner. A distinguished man of letters, whose opinion would be regarded as oracular in Spain, and whose familiar acquaintance with French and English literature rendered the basis of his judgment as broad as that of almost any one—told me that he regarded Mr. Ticknor's work as 'the best history of a literature that he had ever seen.'"

The next great work in which Mr. Ticknor engaged, was one for the advancement and lasting honor of his native city—the noble Public Library of Boston, in which, from first to last, he took a deep and active interest. The abiding honor of originating this great charity, belongs to a member of one of the most remarkable families this country or any other has produced—indeed, I doubt whether another such bright record of hereditary ability, descending through six generations, can be found in the annals of the world. It is scarcely necessary to say that its name is Quincy. During the mayoralty of Josiah Quincy, Jr., the eldest son of, for many years, the distinguished head of Harvard University, that extraordinary and eccentric individual, M. Alexander Vattemare, who had previously visited this country in the prosecution of his favorite plan of international exchange, sent a valuable donation of books from the city of Paris, to the city of Boston, and Mr. Quincy, as Mayor, took the opportunity, in a communication to the city council, relating to this gift, and M. Vattemare's scheme, dated, October 14th, 1847, to bring "the consideration of the propriety of commencing a public library," before the municipal government, and resolutions which this communication induced both branches to pass, established "The Public Library of the City of Boston," which as Mr. Edward Edwards, of London, in his "Free Town Libraries in Britain, France, Germany, and America," shows, was "the first really free and unrestricted library in the world." From this date until 1851, the progress was slow, but in that year it having



been ascertained that over four thousand volumes had been collected towards a free library, a board of trustees was appointed, for the purpose of fostering the good work into fruition. Of this board, Edward Everett was chairman, and his colleagues were, George Ticknor, John P. Bigelow, Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, and Thomas G. Appleton.

How the plan progressed under their care the result amply proves. The preliminary report on the subject, prepared by Mr. Ticknor, fell into the hands of Joshua Bates, of London, a partner in the famed banking house of Baring Brothers & Company, and it was through its medium, together with the personal influence of its author, that the munificent endowment was obtained which erected the present stately Bates Hall, the only terms upon which it was conditioned being that it should be "free to all; with no other restrictions than are necessary for the preservation of the books." To this grand enterprise for many years, Mr. Ticknor devoted large portions of his precious time, laboring most assiduously, in selecting books, making out lists for purchasing, and in perfecting all the minutiae of the library system, and to him, the city of his birth is indebted, perhaps more than to any other man, for the complete practical workings of this great machine. In its interest he made a third voyage to Europe, during the years 1856 and 1857, consulting with Mr. Bates, its great benefactor, and choosing volumes for its shelves. On the death of Mr. Everett in January, 1865, Mr. Ticknor was appointed to succeed him as President of the Board of Trustees, and he continued to perform the duties of the office until June, 1866, when he resigned and the following year retired from all official connection with this body. The citizens of Boston, desiring to testify "by some permanent memorial their appreciation of his disinterested labors as a trustee of the institution during fourteen years, and of his liberality in adding to its usefulness by a gift of many thousand volumes," addressed him a letter in May, 1867, requesting that he would sit for a portrait or bust, to be

deposited in the hall of the library. To this request he complied, and a bust was made by Milmore and presented to the city in June, 1868, for which he chose the motto, "*Libris semper amicis.*"

Mr. Ticknor was named by his friend Daniel Webster, together with Mr. Everett, Professor Felton, and Hon. George Ticknor Curtis, one of his literary executors, and it was supposed the duty would have fallen upon him of preparing for publication a life of the giant statesman. But the task has lately been performed by the last and sole survivor of the four, who acknowledges in the introduction to his work the great indebtedness due to his kinsman, Mr. Ticknor, for the thorough revision he gave to the text, and then adds, "All who know the strength of his memory, the soundness of his judgments, and the severity of his taste, will appreciate, as I do, the advantage I have derived from his assistance." To the "Memorial," however, printed under the editorial supervision of his accomplished friend Mr. George S. Hillard, Mr. Ticknor contributed an account of the "Illness and Death of the Great Statesman," whose dying words "I still live," are and ever will be as true as when they were uttered.

On the 28th day of January, 1859, died suddenly of apoplexy, the true, the noble, and the gifted Prescott, and upon Mr. Ticknor devolved the sad pleasure of preparing for the press such a memorial of his literary life as was supposed might be expected. This volume, which perhaps has been the most generally read of Mr. Ticknor's writings, was issued in an elegant quarto with numerous illustrations, in 1863, and again the following year, in two less expensive forms. It has been considered, and justly so, one of the most finished and beautiful biographies in the language. To me it has a double charm, for it was the means of my becoming personally acquainted with its author. Soon after its appearance, I prepared an article on Mr. Prescott with Mr. Ticknor's work for my basis, which was subsequently printed in a periodical and a few copies struck off in pamphlet form, one of which was forwarded to him, and in concluding a very compli-

mentary acknowledgment of it, he says of his friend, "Whatever is said or done in his honor is always interesting to me." It was not many months later before I was in Boston, for a few days, and at the suggestion of a friend I called on Mr. Ticknor, at his far-famed residence in Park Street, opposite the common. On sending up my card I was immediately invited to his study, where I was cordially received by him, in company with Mr. Cogswell and Mr. Hillard. He at once alluded to my tribute to his friend, and also referred to another production of mine on a Spanish American subject. I intimated a desire to see the portrait of Scott, which Leslie had painted from life, expressly for Mr. Ticknor, in 1825, and pointing it out, he spoke of his visit to Abbotsford, in 1819, with all the freshness of an event not a week old, especially calling my attention to the interesting fact, that the Mr. Cogswell, then present, was his companion on that occasion, nearly half a century before. The portrait of Scott had the post of honor on the walls,—over the mantle, and it had escaped my observation, owing to the room being darkened by the lateness of the hour. His books were all properly classified in their cases, ready for easy reference, and the whole atmosphere of the surroundings made one forgetful of the proximity of the outside world. This house was for many years the centre of the highest culture, and of the choicest literary and social element of the American Athens, and it was a witticism of Theodore Parker, that no man could consider himself of any account in the world of Boston, if he was not admitted to Mr. Ticknor's study. He was virtually the autocrat of Boston literary society. As I was leaving, I asked him, if he had a scrap of Prescott's writing he could spare me, but he said he feared all had been begged away. Nearly a year afterwards, certainly when this request had escaped my memory, I received a note from him, in which he says: "It is seldom I turn up anything of the late Mr. Prescott's fit for an autograph—so rarely did he write even notes with his own hand, in consequence of the infirmity of his sight. But I

found one the other day, and send it to you, in answer to your wish expressed long ago, but has not been forgotten or neglected, as you now see." This letter, with its enclosure, now finds a fitting place in a copy of the quarto edition of the biography, which I look upon as one of the choicest volumes in my collection.

During Mr. Ticknor's first visit to Spain in 1818, he was elected a corresponding member of the Royal Spanish Academy of History, and subsequently an honorary associate of the Historical and Geographical Society of Brazil. In 1850, the Royal Society of Antiquaries, London, chose him to a fellowship, an honor conferred upon but six other of his countrymen. With the American Philosophical Society and the Antiquarian Society at Worcester, he was connected in membership, and at the time of his decease, he was second on the list of members of the Massachusetts Historical Society; the Hon. James Savage being first, and our Honorary Vice-President, Mr. Winthrop, the third. From 1823, until he made his second visit to Europe, he was one of the Trustees of the Boston Athenæum, and in this institution he took great interest, particularly in that important branch of historical literature too often neglected, the collection and preservation of pamphlets. Harvard and Brown Universities each bestowed upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws in 1850, and his Alma Mater in 1858. He was elected a member of this society in May, 1866.

On the third of January, in the present year, Mr. Ticknor was struck with a partial paralysis, and although the use of his body was gone, his mental faculties remained unimpaired; while up to this time, the only signal of his fast waning years had been a gradual weakening of his once most powerful memory. He died at his residence in Boston, on Thursday, the twenty-sixth day of January, 1871, at three o'clock in the morning, having nearly completed his eightieth year; and on the following Saturday his remains were deposited, privately, in the family vault in the Boyleston Street burying-ground, his pastor, the Rev. Dr. Gannett conducting the services. By his will he provided for the

final disposition of his magnificent collection of books and manuscripts, which in 1850 numbered over fifteen thousand volumes. He gave it to the city of Boston, for the Public Library, together with a sum sufficient to keep it in constant repair and make to it gradual additions. During his lifetime it was always open to those who desired and deserved to use its treasures, and especially to meritorious young men. He did what the owners of valuable books can rarely do—he lent them freely, taking no other precaution than to note the names of the borrowers, and he is said seldom to have had reason to repent for his liberality. He acted always on the theory that the grandest usefulness of a library lay in the freest circulation of its books. Mr. Ticknor was always kind to struggling genius, and in the case of Percival, went even further than friendship called for, in endeavoring to aid him;—he had compassion for his erratic and sensitive nature, and Percival for some time seemed to look to Ticknor to keep bread in his mouth.

Mr. Ticknor was one of the truest types of the literary scholar America has produced, and there is not a community of scholars anywhere in which his name is not honored. Few, whether in public or private life, have enjoyed so wide an intercourse with persons of eminence and distinction, abroad as well as at home. In all the capitals of Europe, which he visited, the highest and most cultivated society welcomed him for the richness and powers of his conversation, his agreeable manners, his varied knowledge and his great social and literary reputation. He was a most delightful and instructive companion, having a remarkable memory well stocked with the fruits of extensive reading and rich with anecdote of distinguished men. His temperament was eminently genial and social, and with his deep sparkling eye, rich olive complexion, soft voice, charming smile, and stately manners, he pictured the Castilian of whose literature he wrote. Ticknor, like Prescott, inherited fortune and married a woman of fortune, and thus was placed at entire leisure for literary pursuits. His opinions were many of them strongly such as are termed con-

servative, and he held to them steadily and expressed them freely as his honest, independent, and individual judgment. In his religious views he was an old-fashioned Unitarian, but contemplated with the deepest sorrow and alarm the tendencies among some of his fellow religionists towards scepticism and unbelief.

Mr. Ticknor omitted in his will to name any literary executor, but the Massachusetts Historical Society has appointed his friend Mr. Hillard to prepare the customary memoir for its published proceedings; and it is intimated that he also contemplates a more extensive biography, for which there are ample materials in the papers left by Mr. Ticknor. Certainly, there is no one better qualified or more competent for the task than this gentleman, whose elegant taste and polished pen are so well known and so justly admired. We shall look eagerly for its fulfilment.

Mr. Ticknor had three children, two of whom—daughters, and the younger the wife of William S. Dexter, Esq., of the Boston bar—with their mother, survive him.

NOTE.—Since the preceding pages were written, the writer has been informed that Mr. Ticknor “gave, by his will, to the Public Library of Boston, only his collection of Spanish literature and Portuguese, which amounted to about four thousand volumes. The money given was to keep this very valuable collection in order, and to add to it when possible.” This bequest, by the terms of the will, was not to take effect until after the death of Mrs. Ticknor; but this lady generously relinquished her right to retain the collection during her life, and accordingly the books were at once transferred to the care of the duly appointed trustee.

